

A resolution (S. Res. 476) designating December 18, 2021, as “National Wreaths Across America Day”.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 476) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. HAWLEY. Madam President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmations of Executive Calendar No. 534, Clare E. Connors, of Hawaii, to be United States Attorney for the District of Hawaii for the term of four years; No. 535, Zachary A. Cunha, of Rhode Island, to be United States Attorney for the District of Rhode Island for the term of four years; No. 536, Nikolas P. Kerest, of Vermont, to be United States Attorney for the District of Vermont for the term of four years; No. 581, Gregory K. Harris, of Illinois, to be United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois for the term of four years; and No. 582, Philip R. Sellinger, of New Jersey, to be United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey for the term of four years.

TRIBUTE TO DR. LOUIS UCCELLINI

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I rise today to acknowledge that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will soon lose a fine public servant to retirement. The National Weather Service’s director, Dr. Louis Uccellini, is retiring at the end of this year. The National Weather Service—NWS—produces the weather forecasts and products that we rely on a daily basis. These predictions are critical for protecting lives and property around the country, and Dr. Uccellini has played a big part of this work for the last several decades. Before I mention any specific accomplishments, let me share a couple of numbers: 43 years of public service, 70 published scientific articles and chapters in books, and more than 4,500 employees working out of some 168 units or offices.

Dr. Uccellini—or Louis, as he urges people to call him—has been passionate about weather since he was a small child. A tremendous snowstorm caught his attention during his youth, and even now, he is still fascinated by winter weather, so much so that among the many offices, teams, and even organizations he founded is the Winter Weather desk at the Weather Pre-

diction Center. Among his many scientific accomplishments, Dr. Uccellini co-wrote what has been deemed the most authoritative study on winter weather, appropriately called “Northeast Snowstorms.”

There is no aspect of today’s weather forecast that Dr. Uccellini didn’t either pioneer, or improve, from models that focus on individual phenomena or areas, to the first ensemble models, to seasonal forecasting models and even space weather. Louis established unified workstations that let forecasters view and assimilate multiple data inputs, and he took an entire forecast division from analog to digital. His ability to look at and integrate multiple types of data inputs and computer systems is why we as a nation can look from a daily forecast to weekly to sub-seasonal to seasonal. He introduced and integrated ocean, wave, water, air quality, and space models with weather models and oversaw all nine of the NWS’s National Centers for Environmental Prediction before being tapped to lead the entire National Weather Service.

Yet Louis is much more than a scientist. His leadership of NWS and pioneering cultural and organizational changes led the Federal contracting trade publication FCW to name him in 2020 as one of America’s top 100 Government Executives, and he was selected to serve as a National Academy of Public Administration Fellow. The ability to lead and manage an organization is difficult even when administration is one’s primary profession. It is a large secondary hat for a scientist to wear, and Louis wore it with aplomb, taking the National Weather Service to new heights of organization, service, and professionalism.

In 2013, Louis took the helm of the Weather Service. He improved the organization’s financial management by creating a budget and organizational structure that mirrored the forecast process. All of NWS is now in alignment: the forecast process, budget portfolio and management structure, creating a stronger sense of mission, and delivering transparency both internally and externally. He truly righted the ship. He actually embraced external audits and advice from consultants and proactively circled back to review changes he was leading at NWS.

One event comes to mind when I think of what will define Uccellini’s most lasting legacy. In April 2011, a dramatic and devastating tornado outbreak that struck our southern States killed 316 people even though the NWS had been warning partners and the community for days in advance. The tragic number of lives lost, despite multiple warnings, led Louis to lead the Weather Service into a new model for communication called Impact-based Decision Support Services, IDSS. The launch of IDSS was a sea change in NWS operations in which the forecast is not an end product but a starting point for forecasters to help emergency

managers advise communities. By deepening Weather Service partnerships with emergency managers, IDSS has increased forecast effectiveness and saved lives. Louis led the NWS toward its goal of creating a Weather-Ready Nation, increasing community and individual readiness and resilience.

There are few public servants like Louis Uccellini. He has strengthened our Nation’s research on and resilience to extreme weather events. On behalf of my constituents in New Hampshire, I thank Dr. Uccellini for his decades of excellent service to our Nation and wish him well in his retirement. He will be missed.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL CHRIS RYAN

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I rise today to honor an exceptional member of the U.S. Air Force. I am proud to enter this tribute into the RECORD as I have had the pleasure of traveling with Chris to London and Ukraine and saw firsthand his professionalism, leadership, and dedication to duty.

Lt. Col. Christopher “Chris” Ryan has distinguished himself through his professional character and dedication by serving this Nation in uniform. A leader and expert communicator, he has provided distinguished service to our country while assigned to the Air Force Senate Liaison Office. He is an outstanding leader and the perfect airman to represent the Air Force on Capitol Hill. Chris has served in the Air Force for over 20 years in both the enlisted and officer ranks. As an aircraft maintenance officer, Chris has led thousands of maintainers in support of the AC-130H, C-17A, KC-135R, and C-5M aircraft.

Throughout his career, Chris has demonstrated his exceptional abilities; he was the 1997 Airman of the Year at Joint Base Andrews and recipient of the John Levitow Award in 2000. Chris was both distinguished graduate for the ROTC Detachment 330 at the University of Maryland-College Park and at the Advanced Maintenance and Munitions Operations School. Further, Chris was recognized as the 2019 Secretary of the Air Force, Legislative Liaison Reserve Officer of the Year. Prior to his current assignment, Chris had the privilege of being selected as an Air Force Legislative Fellow where he was detailed to the Congressional Research Service and then worked for my dear colleague, the senior Senator from Oklahoma and then-chairman of the Armed Services Committee in 2018.

As a legislative liaison in the Air Force Senate Liaison Office from December 2018 to December 2021, Lieutenant Colonel Ryan performed his duties well and without reservation supporting the 115th, 116th, and 117th U.S. Congresses. His strategic thinking and foresight helped to strengthen and improve our national security. Chris accomplished this utilizing his in-depth

Air Force knowledge with numerous engagements between Congress and the Department of the Air Force.

Chris expertly conveyed Department of the Air Force positions on the Air Force Future Design that included the future bomber, tanker, and fighter force. Chris' direct support provided the U.S. Senate critical information necessary for three National Defense Authorization Acts. His efforts helped establish the U.S. Space Force, ensure the confirmation of the 25th and 26th Air Force Secretaries, the 22nd Air Force Chief of Staff, and ensured the Department of the Air Force support of the National Defense Strategy in our return to Great Power Competition.

Lieutenant Colonel Ryan planned and led delegations for Members of Congress on visits all over the world to include the bicameral Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Reagan National Defense Forum. In fact, Chris escorted me to the United Kingdom and Ukraine in 2019. Chris' significant efforts led to successful engagements between this governing body and senior Department of Defense Officials, including the Secretary of the Air Force. All of these engagements helped U.S. Senators understand defense equities and their impact on national security. Due to his direct involvement and stewardship, Members of Congress were able to make informed decisions and ensure the Department of the Air Force was properly resourced and funded.

After serving in this vital role for the past 3 years and becoming a fixture on Capitol Hill, Lieutenant Colonel Ryan will move to his next assignment, as deputy group commander, 514th Maintenance Group, located at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. Chris, his wife Rachel—the chief of staff for the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance at the Department of State—and their children Joshua, Kathrine, and Emma have sacrificed much as a family in service to our Nation. I am thankful for Chris' service and his work with my office and the Senate over the past 3 years on issues important to this great Nation. I salute this American patriot whose selfless service has kept our country safe and strong.

TRIBUTE TO STAFF

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, over the past couple of years, Ohioans and Americans around the country have worked and sacrificed to get our country through this pandemic. Among those who have risen to meet this historic moment are the dedicated public servants on our Senate staff. These patriots have given their all over these last 20 months to protect Ohioans' health, to put money in people's pockets, to keep a roof over people's heads, and to help our State and our country overcome this health and economic crisis.

I would not have been able to do the vital work we have done in the Senate

without their expertise and dedication and talent, and we would not be where we are today as a country—with rising wages, record job growth, and life-saving vaccines—without them. This holiday season, I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in thanking these dedicated professionals for their service to our country:

Ben Ashman; Mohammad Aslami; Blair Austin; Brian Ayers; Diana Baron; Shilesha Bamberg; Sarah Benzing; Emily Blaydes; Gabriel Bitol; Chad Bolt; Alyssa Brockington; Alea Brown; Homer Carlisle; Dani Carlson; Megan Cheney; Min Cheng; Emily Chipps; William Clayton; Beth Clodfelter; Beth Cooper; Alan Cox; J. Bradley Deane; Andrew Dickson; Abigail Duggan; Anthony Eliopoulos; Corey Frayer; Chanty Gbaye; Joe Gilligan; Francis Goins; Anna Gokaldas; Ross Griffin; Stanley Hardy; Sarah Harms; James Harnett; Diop Harris; Rachael Hartford; Jeremy Hekhuis; Joseph Henry; Christian Hill; Leah Hill; Mycheala Holley; Patrick Horn; Aarti Iyer; Alysa James; Marie Therese Kane; Matthew Keyes; Mike King; Zac Kiser; Sue Klein; Geoffrey Knight; Erica Krause; Ben Lockshin; Ann Longworth Orr; Mayra Lozano; Brian Lyons; Megan Malara; Marilee Marks; Drew Martineau; Allison Mazzeo; Jonathan McCracken; Colin McGinnis; Rajani Menon; John Miller; Samantha Miller; Katie Mulhall Quintela; Paulanne Oakes; Tanya Otsuka; Sneha Pandya; John Patterson; Emily Pellegrino; Jordan Pennell; Trudy Perkins; Seth Pringle; John Richards; Charissee Ridgeway; Kate Rodriguez; Pam Rosado; Phil Rudd; John Ryan; Vincent Sarubbi; Vinny Sheu; Sarah Shalash; Ellen Short; William Shostand; Fátima Sierra-Vargas; Jan Singelmann; Cierra Stewart; Laura Swanson; Ché Thomas; Nora Todd; Mary Topolinski; Elisha Tuku; Elaine Vilem; Meghan Vogel; Dariah Williams; Carolina Young.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF RICELAND FOODS

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Riceland Foods.

Riceland's success story mirrors the growth of rice production in Arkansas. The first rice crop grown in Arkansas was produced in 1904. As more Arkansas farmers embraced this new crop, they found that relying on buyers from Texas or Louisiana, who passed through Arkansas infrequently, made sales difficult. That led farmers to build Arkansas' first rice mill in Stuttgart in 1907.

Stuttgart would soon become the center of Arkansas' burgeoning rice industry. In the years around World War I, rice crop prices fluctuated wildly, leading Arkansas producers to meet in Stuttgart to find a path to ensure continued viability. The Arkansas Rice Growers Cooperative Association was born out of this gathering.

The cooperative began as only a rice sales organization. As rice farming became more popular in Arkansas, the Arkansas Rice Growers Cooperative Association began leasing and eventually purchasing mills to process rice grown by area farmers.

In 1946, the cooperative began marketing its products under the Riceland label. In 1960, it diversified by merging with the Arkansas Grain Cooperative, which shared soybeans with neighboring soybean processing plant in Stuttgart. Shortly thereafter, Riceland Foods became the official name for the cooperative, which would remain headquartered in Stuttgart.

Today, Arkansas is the Nation's leading rice producer, and Riceland has grown into the world's largest miller and marketer of rice, as well as one of the Mid-South's major soybean processors.

Riceland has its own signature brands for home cooking and is also a major industrial supplier for companies such as Anheuser-Busch, General Mills, Gerber, and Kellogg's. They also supply to the food service industry nationwide.

The rice the cooperative's farmers grow is turned into products that reach consumers in more than 75 countries in North America, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

At a recent celebration to mark Riceland's 100th anniversary, chairman of the board Roger Pohlner spotlighted the cooperative's greatest assets: its members and employees. He told attendees, "Our founding members knew we were stronger together." The cooperative's 100 years of success is evidence of just how true that statement is.

I congratulate Riceland for reaching this historic milestone and wish them many more centuries of success.●

TRIBUTE TO JULIA RITA URSONE

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, today, I rise to recognize Mrs. Julia "Julie" Rita Ursone, a longtime Connecticut resident who turns 100 on January 8, 2022.

Born in Providence, RI, Mrs. Ursone was the child of Italian immigrants who became U.S. citizens. She moved to Stamford, CT, in 1947, where she has lived ever since.

Mrs. Ursone grew up during the Great Depression and readily supported American efforts during World War II through factory work.

To this day, she still lives in the house she built in 1951 with her late husband, who served in World War II and was an active member of their community. Passionate about doing her part in support of our Nation, Mrs. Ursone remains an active voter.

I hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating Mrs. Julia Ursone, her son Lou, and the rest of her family on this milestone of her 100th birthday.●

RECOGNIZING SMOKEY PIG BAR-B-Q

• Mr. PAUL. Madam President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an